

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND FIFTEEN

—
H.P. 163 - L.D. 231

**An Act To Ensure That Schoolchildren with Dyslexia Receive the Assistance
Needed**

Mandate preamble. This measure requires one or more local units of government to expand or modify activities so as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues but does not provide funding for at least 90% of those expenditures. Pursuant to the Constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 21, 2/3 of all of the members elected to each House have determined it necessary to enact this measure.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRS §4710-B is enacted to read:

§4710-B. Dyslexia screening

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Alphabet knowledge" means the ability to name, distinguish shapes of, write and identify the sounds of the letters of the alphabet.

B. "Decoding" means the ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

C. "Dyslexia" means a condition that is neurological in origin and characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities that typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and in relation to the provision of effective classroom instruction; the secondary consequences of dyslexia may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

D. "Encoding" means the ability to put ideas into messages to be delivered to and understood by other people.

E. "Phonological and phonemic awareness" means awareness of the phonological structure of words.

F. "Rapid naming" means the ability to connect visual and verbal information by giving appropriate names to common objects, colors, letters and digits.

G. "Sound-symbol recognition" means the ability to understand the relationship between symbols or combinations of symbols and the sounds they make.

2. Dyslexia screening. Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, a school administrative unit shall screen for dyslexia students from kindergarten to grade 2 who have difficulty, as identified by a classroom teacher, in an area described in paragraphs A to F. The screening of a student must include an examination of the student's:

A. Phonological and phonemic awareness;

B. Sound-symbol recognition;

C. Alphabet knowledge;

D. Decoding skills;

E. Rapid naming skills; and

F. Encoding skills.

3. Dyslexia coordinator. There is created within the department the position of dyslexia coordinator to assist the department in complying with the provisions of this section and the general education interventions required in the department's special education rules as they pertain to students struggling with reading or showing early indicators of reading difficulty. The dyslexia coordinator must have a background in reading and language difficulties, including dyslexia, and in language and literacy. The dyslexia coordinator shall develop before March 1, 2016 and update annually thereafter a plan that:

A. Implements dyslexia awareness training for teachers;

B. Implements professional development in evidence-based screening practices; and

C. Identifies needs of school administrative units for implementing evidence-based practices and response to scientific, research-based intervention strategies for reading and language-based learning difficulties.

Sec. 2. Appointment of dyslexia coordinator. The Commissioner of Education shall hire a dyslexia coordinator pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 4710-B by October 1, 2015.